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ABSTRACT

This guide provides associations with information to help their members begin or expand a commitment to the School-to-Career initiative (STC). (Companion guides for employers, labor unions and engagement specialists are available separately.) It begins by describing these three easy steps to getting started: plan your strategy, choose your activities, and get connected. The following sections discuss preparing today's students and tomorrow's workforce; STC as an educational strategy; the role of associations; focusing your strategies, including examples of activities to build on what exists, solve a need, and invest in your community; and examples of participation geared to the type of association. A section of additional resources provides websites to help answer questions and gain access to proven tools and strategies. (YLB)

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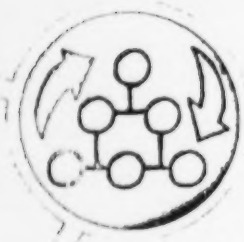
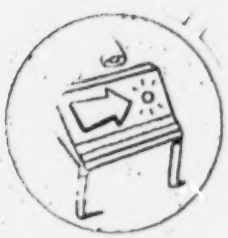
Get Connected to School-to-Career

A QUICK GUIDE for Associations



Preparing Today's Students and Tomorrow's Workforce



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Getting Started- Three Easy Steps

School-to-Career makes sense for students and your members. Below are three easy steps to begin your Association's participation in this exciting initiative.

STEP 1—Plan Your Strategy

Build on What Exists to provide maximum impact without having to start from scratch or go it alone.

Solve a Need by using School-to-Career to meet your Association's objectives and providing a valuable service to your members.

Invest in Your Community by taking leadership in building high-performing schools, future leaders and vibrant local economies.

STEP 2 —Choose Your Activities

Here are some of the many ways your members can participate in School-to-Career:

With Students

- Provide work-based learning opportunities such as internships, job shadows and career mentoring.
- Be a guest speaker in local classrooms and host students for workplace tours.

With Teachers

- Provide industry expertise in designing curriculum and projects.
- Offer teacher internships and job shadows to help them learn about your members' businesses and industries.

With Other School-to-Career Leaders

- Take a proactive role in promoting supportive public policy for School-to-Career.
- Participate on advisory boards of local School-to-Career partnerships and school programs.
- Use your expertise and resources to promote School-to-Career and increase participation.

STEP 3 —Get Connected

Now that you understand the benefits of School-to-Career and how to participate, it is time to Get Connected. Here is a checklist of your next steps:

- ✓ Call your local School-to-Career Partnership and schedule a meeting. To contact your local partnership, call (800) 962-8821 or visit www.stcconnect.com.
- ✓ Survey your existing education activities and decide how School-to-Career might support your efforts. You can begin by promoting success stories and School-to-Career campaigns through newsletters and meetings.
- ✓ Go deeper and make smart decisions about participation by completing a *Next Steps Worksheet*, accessing additional tools and strategies and reading success stories, all found at www.nww.org and www.stc-clearinghouse.org.

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Preparing Today's Students and Tomorrow's Workforce

Industry associations, chambers of commerce and civic organizations (Associations) increasingly look towards strategic partnerships with education to improve student performance, strengthen the future workforce and build strong communities. One solution is School-to-Career. Currently there are 47 local School-to-Career partnerships across California that stand ready to partner with your members to impact today's students and the vitality of local economies.

This *Quick Guide* for Associations will help you and your members begin or expand a commitment to School-to-Career. By using this guide and the easy-to-use tools and strategies found at www.nww.org and www.stc-clearinghouse.org (including companion *Quick Guides* for employers and organized labor targeted to your members), you can add unique value to your membership by helping them turn a commitment to education into a strategic advantage.

School-to-Career Facts:

- *According to research from the National School-to-Work Office, one out of four U.S. businesses with 25 or more employees participate in a School-to-Career partnership.*
- *A recent report from the National Conference of State Legislatures shows that students who participate in School-to-Career are more motivated in school, more likely to attend college or advanced training and are less likely to drop out.*
- *A survey of 1200 California parents by Ogilvy Public Relations found that nine out of 10 parents endorsed the concept of School-to-Career.*
- *A study by the National Employer Leadership Council shows companies average a 2-1 return on investment from participation in School-to-Career.*

School-to-Career - Making Real Connections

School-to-Career is an educational strategy that makes learning more relevant and helps students build the skills to be successful in the 21st century. Career academies and real-life projects linked to the curriculum provide for innovation in the schools. Work-based learning such as internships, job shadowing and career mentoring provides the connections that bring learning to a new level. The results are more motivated, high-performing students who have the skills to succeed in college, careers and life.

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The Role of Associations

Large employers, small businesses, labor organizations and community leaders of all kinds are investing time, resources and expertise to support School-to-Career systems – with powerful results. Associations play a unique role through a variety of activities in this process.

We started with a volunteer drive that would put a business partner in every high school classroom. One hundred and thirty five volunteers later, we are well on our way. Our next step will be to design a job shadow and internship component tied to student performance.

KEN OPLINGER
PRESIDENT/CEO, VISALIA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Roles

Consider the appropriate role for your organization. Most Associations get involved on one or more of the following three levels:

- Communicate the value of School-to-Career to your members and the general community.
- Serve as a "broker" of interested members and local organizations to connect them with proven School-to-Career organizations and activities.
- Directly coordinate School-to-Career activities for individual members.

Activities

Here is a sample of effective ways Associations can support local School-to-Career activities:

- Provide valuable information about School-to-Career to members, especially *Employer Quick Guides* and other implementation tools and materials.
- Actively promote School-to-Career through events, materials and the media.
- Facilitate member involvement in specific activities by recruiting new partners and building strategic relationships with your local School-to-Career partnership or a community organization.
- Directly implement and coordinate a School-to-Career program such as a job shadowing campaign, career mentoring program, classroom projects or guest speaking.

Critical Success Factor

Start small and build on your success with School-to-Career, focusing on where you as an employer, labor or civic organization add unique value. For example, by simply inserting an announcement for campaigns such as Groundhog Job Shadow Day into your newsletter, you can generate significant participation from members and potentially impact hundreds of youth.

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Focusing Your Strategies - A Closer Look

To be successful, it is important to target your involvement. Think about the priorities and needs of your organization and your members. Having clear and targeted strategies for School-to-Career that leverage your resources will ensure your success.

Below are some proven strategies that Associations have used to focus their efforts. Simply choose the strategies that make the most sense for your organization and apply them.

Build on What Exists

Many of your members already have a commitment to education, especially through employee volunteer programs and donations. Local organizations and schools are coordinating successful School-to-Career activities. There are also campaigns such as Groundhog Job Shadow Day and California Intern Summer that are turnkey ways for you to become involved and make a big difference for youth. Building on what already exists provides maximum impact without re-inventing the wheel.

PROFILE – *Brokering Connections between Industry and Schools*

The Entertainment Industry Development Corporation (EIDC), with 30 industry representatives on its board, provides leadership and cutting edge information to schools in areas such as motion pictures, broadcasting, communications and multimedia. EIDC directly supports and connects representatives from its industry to nine Entertainment and New Media Academies in the Los Angeles Unified School District. This includes teacher professional development on industry needs and technology and opportunities for students such as job shadowing and internships.

The following activities are examples of ways Associations can leverage what already exists:

- Grow an existing education taskforce or initiative.
- Survey what your members are already doing with education and build on it.
- Promote existing School-to-Career activities and success of your members, especially during your own events, trade shows and meetings.
- Add School-to-Career profiles and stories to your own information and communication systems, such as websites, databases and newsletters.
- Connect to and strengthen established School-to-Career partnerships and school structures.

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PROFILE –

Recruitment through Civic Organizations

The Los Angeles Rotary Club understands the power of mobilizing its members to support School-to-Career. The Rotary formed a specific committee for Junior Achievement (an active member of UniteLA, the local School-to-Career partnership). Through the committee, members hold meetings, host presenters and conduct one-on-one networking to raise funds and solicit classroom volunteers for JA. Leading up to the winter, the committee also solicits volunteers from Rotary members for National Groundhog Job Shadow Day.

Solve a Need

Your members can meet short-term needs by bringing enthusiastic, skilled young people into the workplace. Student interns can help complete meaningful projects in business and the community, and can be a strategic investment in the future workforce. Your Association can also gain positive exposure and publicity through School-to-Career.

School-to-Career can meet the needs of Associations through the following activities:

- Provide a valuable service to members.
- Build membership through commitment to your School-to-Career activities.
- Develop positive publicity for your organization through high profile education initiatives.
- Provide a platform for needed policy advocacy.
- Promote careers in specific industries to increase the future workforce.

Invest in Your Community

Strong communities mean vibrant local economies. Helping to build better schools and future leaders benefits everyone. School-to-Career provides an easy, coordinated vehicle to significantly impact local schools and students and allows you to demonstrate a leadership role in the communities in which your members live and work.

School-to-Career helps Associations invest in the community through the following activities:

- Support and promote education projects that also meet community needs.
- Build stronger local education and workforce development systems.
- Increase school performance where your members send their children.
- Strengthen the local economic and business environment.
- Connect to other public and private institutions to align civic priorities with education partnerships and school improvement.

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Activities that Work

The approach your Association takes to School-to-Career will depend on the priorities of your membership and your internal capacity to support and grow specific activities. Here are some ideas to help frame your participation:

Chambers of Commerce have a significant voice with policymakers and the media, and can mobilize a critical mass of employers to participate in School-to-Career. By directly connecting School-to-Career to other economic development activities, chambers can drive involvement and resources in a number of activities.

Industry Associations have information on industry-specific trends and needs, and when shared with educators, this information makes school more relevant and current. These groups also have unique access to large trade shows and conferences where student and teacher involvement can greatly impact learning and the overall success of the event.

Civic Organizations may not have staff to run specific programs, but are effective at communicating with local leaders, fund raising and generating positive publicity for successful school activities. Civic organizations have strong ties to the local community and can be particularly effective in mobilizing small businesses to participate in School-to-Career.

We became involved in School-to-Career because of a lack of skilled construction trade workers in the county. The progress we have made through the Marin County Office of Education and the ROP program at Redwood High School is a great example of how good things happen when you collaborate.

PETER ARRIGONI
MANAGER, MARIN BUILDERS EXCHANGE

Quick Planning Check List

- ✓ Do your homework and identify a priority for your association.
- ✓ Create a specific plan for participation.
- ✓ Start with a manageable, measurable pilot activity (e.g., Groundhog Job Shadow Day).
- ✓ Review success and improvement areas then expand the activity.
- ✓ Connect the activity to your core business plan and move to the next priority.

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Critical Success Factor

Work with a local School-to-Career partnership (or intermediary organization) to help with program design and implementation. These organizations make it easy to connect to local schools, provide training and technical support, and streamline your activities to ensure success.

The following are a sample of specific School-to-Career activities that have proven impact on student performance and economic development:

- Job Shadowing
- Internships
- Workplace Tours and Guest Speaking
- Career Mentoring & Telementoring
- Input on Curriculum and Standards
- Recognition Events
- Advisory Boards
- Curriculum Teams
- Leadership and Marketing
- Policy Advocacy

For further descriptions of these activities, visit the websites listed in the Additional Resources section of this *Quick Guide*. There are also several high-profile campaigns for promoting work-based learning for youth, such as National Groundhog Job Shadow Day and California Intern Summer. These campaigns provide an easy and fun way to connect your members to School-to-Career. Also consider hosting students at your own offices, as this builds excitement and shows your members how simple it is to participate.

Your organization or members may already have some form of these activities in place and your commitment will help them grow. In every community there are also effective intermediary organizations among employers, associations and schools that can facilitate your involvement and make it easy for you to implement and grow your commitment.

PROFILE – *Building on What Exists*

SEMI, an industry association of semiconductor manufacturers and related businesses, works with Workforce Silicon Valley, the local School-to-Career partnership in San Jose, to host hundreds of students and teachers at their annual SEMICON tradeshow. The education component of the event is a valuable and fun addition to the experience of attendees. It also provides students and teachers an opportunity to learn about the industry, visit the tradeshow floor and make contacts.

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Additional Resources

Here are a number of additional resources to help you answer questions and gain access to proven tools and strategies:

Sustaining the Future: A Chamber Guide to Developing Tomorrow's Workforce

A toolkit for chambers of commerce and similar industry associations to help strengthen local School-to-Career partnerships. In it are proven practices, tools and methodologies gleaned from chambers of commerce from around the country. Visit www.uschamber.com/cwp or call (202) 463-5525.

National Association of Manufacturers

Through its website www.nam.org, this association provides several straightforward guides for connecting associations and employers to School-to-Career. Type in key word search "school-to-career" for a full listing.

PROFILE – *Promoting School-to-Career through Communications Systems*

The Business Education Committee of the Greater Fresno Chamber of Commerce publishes a straightforward on-line newsletter called Ed Mail to inform and recruit member businesses into School-to-Career. Ed Mail is brief (usually two pages), easy-to-read and combines information about schools, business partners and School-to-Career activities.

www.nww.org

The website for New Ways to Work that also serves as a portal for additional employer and labor participation information, such as:

- A Next Steps Worksheet for associations to take further action.
- Proven strategies and effective practices from throughout the state and country.
- A guide for creating safe and legal work-based learning experiences, focusing on can-do approaches to laws and regulations and issues related to having youth in the workplace.
- Specific tips for small businesses and industry specific examples.
- Links to materials and worksheets on specific strategies and activities.
- Links to additional resources and School-to-Career organizations.

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www.stc-clearinghouse.com

A one-stop website for helpful tools and materials for School-to-Career and other education improvement initiatives. At the School-to-Career clearinghouse you can search for best-practice tools and materials from across the state. This site also houses this *Quick Guide* for Associations, the companion *Quick Guides* for Employers and Organized Labor as well as other guides, handbooks and helpful tools available to download in PDF format.

www.worksite21.org

An employer-focused site, developed by the Oregon Business Council, with interactive tools for participation in School-to-Career called "The Bigger Picture."

www.stcconnect.com

An easy way to get connected to statewide campaigns such as National Groundhog Job Shadowing and California Intern Summer.

www.nelc.org

Website for the National Employer Leadership Council (NELC) which provides numerous tools and reports on successful employer participation in School-to-Career. In particular, download the *Employer Participation Model* and the *Intuitions Confirmed* report about employer return on investment through School-to-Career. NELC also runs numerous initiatives in high growth industries in which you and your members can become involved.

PROFILE – *Creating Innovative Curriculum*

The Visalia Chamber of Commerce leads a school-based activity called Business Education Connection. Member businesses helped design career curriculum for high school sophomores and juniors focusing on conflict resolution, creative thinking, ethics, team building, customer service, financial literacy, and the hiring process. Business partners also are directly involved in teaching the curriculum in the classroom.

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This Quick Guide is produced with funding from the Governor's School-to-Career Advisory Council's Employer and Labor Involvement Committee under contract with:

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